

COMMENTS ON MICROFORM AS PUBLICATION Z.N.(S.) 2182

(see vol. 33: 98-104; vol. 34: 9-10)

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I am opposed to including microform as a valid method of publication under Article 8 of the Code in the proposed revision. I recognise that microform is the solution in terms of initial cost and storage space in many fields of publication, but as a practising palaeontologist I do not consider it practical in identifying or comparing species.

My objections are:

(1) When describing or identifying a taxon, I usually have more than one book in front of me in order to compare diagnoses, discussions and illustrations with my specimens and with each other. The use of a microform reader would make this an awkward, if not an impossible task. Photographic enlargements of even the salient portions in a microform publication multiplied by the number of individual users will, in time, increase the cost by several magnitudes as compared to the cost of the original conventional printing.

(2) I either own or have photographic copies of the pertinent references in my field, the Ostracoda, and have found it both efficient and practical to underline or annotate text and illustrations. Furthermore, I am in the habit of writing—in key words in foreign language publications whenever I use a translator or a dictionary. This is impossible on microforms.

(3) Many biologists publish photographs in stereo-pairs, and this practice will probably increase because of the availability of scanning electron microscopes. Enlargement of the microfiche plates, such as published by the Geological Society of America in Dr Merrill's paper cannot be used with the presently available stereoscopes.

The Geological Society of America has recently not been a publisher of palaeontological matter. For many years the Society subsidised the Paleontological Society's numbers of the *Journal of Paleontology* so as to ensure the publication of palaeontological papers. According to the 1976-77 Mini Catalogue of the GSA, only nine Memoirs and 14 Special Papers containing plates that illustrate fossils were published during the decade 1967-76. This amounts to less than three papers a year, even if I misinterpreted the titles, or a few more were published and are out of print. Some authors in a symposium on Bryozoa withdrew manuscripts from the GSA because it proposed to publish the symposium in microfiche, and some of my colleagues will not submit papers with illustrations to the GSA for publication in microfiche form.

Can it be that those who advocate the validation of microform for publication under Article 8 are over-reacting to the apparent high cost of printing? After all, salaries have also increased at a considerable rate, and some grants include money to defray in whole or in part the cost of publication. It is my considered judgment that the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature should postpone action on this matter and exclude it from the proposed revision of the Code. Who knows what technological advances will develop during the next decade or two, when a more palatable solution may

become available?

Although the above are my own opinions, I append a list of colleagues who have read this letter and agree in principle with my position.

Jean M. Berdan	U.S. Geological Survey
Blake W. Blackwelder	U.S. Geological Survey
Richard S. Boardman	Smithsonian Institution
Fenner A. Chace	Smithsonian Institution
Alan H. Cheetham	Smithsonian Institution
Anne C. Cohen	Smithsonian Institution
G. Arthur Cooper	Smithsonian Institution
Thomas H. Cronin	U.S. Geological Survey
Richard A. Grant	Smithsonian Institution
Richard S. Hubrick	Smithsonian Institution
Ralph W. Imlay	Smithsonian Institution
Louis S. Kornicker	Smithsonian Institution
David L. Pawson	Smithsonian Institution
Marian H. Pettibone	Smithsonian Institution
John Pojeta	U.S. Geological Survey
Harald Rehder	Smithsonian Institution
John E. Repetski	U.S. Geological Survey
Klaus Ruetzler	Smithsonian Institution
Charles C. Smith	U.S. Geological Survey
Michael E. Taylor	U.S. Geological Survey
Erik Thomsen	University of Aarhus, Denmark
Frank C. Whitmore Jr.	U.S. Geological Survey
Austin B. Williams	N.M.F.S. Systematics Lab., U.S.N.M.

(2) By R.W. Crosskey, W.J. Knight, L.A. Mound, K.S.O. Sattler & R.I. Vane-Wright (*Department of Entomology, British Museum (Natural History), London SW7 5BD, England*)

We should like to comment on two of the main questions concerning publication on which the Commission is seeking opinions, viz. (1) should quality of reproduction be taken into account for determining whether a work is published? and (2) should microform (including microfiche) be accepted as a legitimate method of publication?

(1) *Quality of reproduction.* It has been suggested that quality of reproduction should be a criterion for determining whether a work is published, on the grounds that many works that are issued by currently forbidden processes are better produced than others that satisfy the present criteria of publication but are technically poor productions.

Superficially this is an attractive suggestion since it is true that some publications are materially shoddy. But to operate a system in which *quality* of reproduction was a determinant for publication would require the continual exercise of subjective judgements. This it seems to us is undesirable, for the more objective the Code can be made the more likely it is to promote the